

Enumclaw High School
2222 Porter Street
Enumclaw
King County
Washington

HABS No. WA-175

HABS
WASH,
17-ENUM,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, CA 94102

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

HABS
WASH,
17-ENUM,
1-

STATE Washington		COUNTY King County	TOWN OR VICINITY Enumclaw
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Enumclaw High School			HABS NO. WA-175
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Old Enumclaw Junior High School			
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 2222 Porter Street			
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1921; additions in 1928, 1935, and 1938		ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Harlan Thomas (1921) William Mallis (1935)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) See attached pages.			
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Colonial Revival			
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick, with cast stone ornamentation (see attached pages for additional information).			
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) See attached pages.			
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE See attached pages for architectural description.			
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) See attached pages for architectural description.			
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Additions made in 1928, 1935, and 1938; see attached pages for additional information.			
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE The building has been abandoned since 1984 and is currently slated for demolition.			
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE Photodocumentation of the Enumclaw High School was required by the Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation under the State Environmental Policy Act.			
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) All information included in this form and on the attached pages has been taken from the National Register nomination for the property.			
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Carolyn Foos, of the Enumclaw Arts Council, and Mark Brack, of the Washington Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation compiled the National Register nomination dated Mar. 3, 1984			DATE March 16, 1987

DESCRIPTION

The Enumclaw High School is an impressive three-story structure constructed of reinforced concrete and faced with red common bond brick. The school dominates the surrounding neighborhood of small frame houses. The building has been enlarged several times, and exhibits an irregular plan; however, its primary facade, facing Porter Street, maintains its original appearance. The restrained ornamentation of the structure is derivative of the Colonial Revival Style.

The Enumclaw High School occupies an entire city block along Porter Street between Kibler and Hillcrest Avenues. A large triangular playing field stretches from the school to the west and is not included in this nomination. The surrounding area consists of one and two story wood frame homes with some multiple family units. Most of these buildings appear to date from 1910 to 1930.

The original composition of the building is distinguished by two distinct, but attached, elements--the main classroom building and the gymnasium. Both share the same structural mode and height and are constructed on a base of reinforced concrete. The facade of the classroom building is symmetrical and divided into five sections by the slightly projecting pavilions at the entrance and north and south ends. Regularly spaced across this entire facade are large twelve-over-twelve double-hung wood sash windows. The windows are such a prominent element of the design that they seem to occupy more space than the brick walls. The windows are detailed with simple brick sills and lintels.

Between the second and third floors is a belt course of vertically laid stretcher bricks. Between the windows of the second and third floor is some decorative brickwork highlighted by cast-stone blocks which almost create the appearance of spandrels. Above the third floor is a simple cast-stone cornice which is topped by a parapet that forms pediments over the projecting pavilions. Other parapet details include cast stone coping and plaques and a cast stone cartouche in the central pediment.

The main entrance to the school is articulated by two large Tuscan columns supporting an entablature and a heavily molded segmentally arched pediment. The words "High School" are incised on the frieze and the word "Junior" has been added in the tympanum. The original doors to the school have been replaced with metal and glass safety doors. However, two wood and glass doors flank the outside edge of the columns. The original transom above the main doors still survives. A marble plaque beside the entrance is inscribed with the words "knowledge is the only fountain of human liberty."

The gymnasium is a large "T" shaped structure that is attached by means of a wing to the classroom building. The prominent decorative features of this gymnasium are sets of three, tall (nearly two-story), round arched windows that adorn the building on its three primary facades. The windows have wood mullions and are detailed in a modified Palladian motif. These graceful windows and the classroom building's main entrance are clearly inspired by the Georgian period of American Colonial architecture. Other details on the gymnasium include a cast stone cornice, keystones, and small rondels and plaques. Wings extend from the north and south sides of the gymnasium's Porter Street elevations and provide entry into the building. The doors have transoms which are capped by plaques and round arch windows. Other windows are square or rectangular multi-pane double-hung sash. The gymnasium has suffered a few alterations in recent years. A fire escape has been added on the south side and a new door has been cut into the wall. On the south and west elevations, the upper two stories have been sheathed in a processed wood siding that does not complement the rest of the structure. Internally, the building's arrangement of manual arts classrooms on the first floor with a two-story gymnasium above has been maintained.

To the west of the gymnasium is a detached six bay concrete and brick garage. This structure is deteriorated and has been altered and does not contribute to the significance of the school property.

A large classroom wing parallels Kibler Avenue on the building's north side. This wing was added in 1928 by Thomaa and it duplicates much of the design of the original classroom building though the window arrangement has been modified and made less formal by the pairing of windows. This wing was extended to the west in 1938 by the length of one classroom (three pairs of windows). Designed by William Mallis, it imitates Thomas's style.

In 1935, a very large addition was attached to the rear of the original building. This addition was also designed by William Mallis and maintains the standard three stories. This elevation was obviously considered to be visually unimportant, for there is a complete lack of the symmetry and detailing that distinguishes the other facades. Some walls are almost entirely blank except for scattered windows. The utility of the space was the main concern of the architect for this project. A new two story boy's gymnasium was constructed on the southwest corner and a large cafeteria and auditorium were in the center. Much of this addition appears to be constructed of hollow tile with steel roof supports.

Interior features of the original building include wide central hall, hardwood floors, simple door and window surrounds, chair and picture moldings, and built-in cabinets and blackboards. Many of the rooms have been altered, particularly with the addition of dropped ceilings. Some metal safety doors and lockers have also been installed. The 1935 auditorium has moldings around its proscenium, wooden chairs, a slightly arched ceiling supported by steel posts, and shields with the letter "E" over each entrance to the hall.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Enumclaw High School is most significant as Enumclaw's sole reminder of its long educational heritage. However, like many schools in other small towns, the Enumclaw High School has served the entire community in a variety of roles. For many decades after its erection in 1921, the Enumclaw High School remained its community's center for cultural, social, educational, and sports activities. Additions to the building during the depression also helped to relieve local unemployment. The design of the building is typical of large schools built during this period with its restrained ornamentation, central halls, and banks of windows. Designed by the notable architect, Harlan Thomas, the school has remained one of the most prominent structures in town.

The Enumclaw High School stands on land that was purchased from the Catholic Diocese for \$5,000 in 1920. The original site totaled approximately five acres and contained a cemetery, which was relocated. The school board retained Harlan Thomas to design the school. At that time, Thomas was a well-known architect practicing in Seattle and had designed at least three other schools in the state, including a primary school in Enumclaw. The successful completion of this earlier commission no doubt aided Thomas in the receipt of the High School contract. Peter Woock of Seattle was selected as the contractor.

The school was dedicated in September of 1921. The ceremonies were attended by a variety of important officials including Mr. J. Tigert, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, and Mrs. Josephine Preston, the State Superintendent. These officials had come to Enumclaw to acknowledge the consolidation of the greater Enumclaw School District. Previous to this time, the geographic jurisdiction of most rural school districts had been quite limited. A small town would have its own school, which was largely unable to provide a variety of staff or instruction. School district consolidation enabled a number of small communities to pool their resources and create central educational facilities superior to their smaller predecessors. The Enumclaw School District consolidation was considered quite progressive for its time and, at the dedication of the new school, Mrs. Preston stated "that the consolidation system adopted by the Enumclaw School District was being made an example throughout the state." (Enumclaw Courier Herald, September 30, 1921.) The growth of the school district can also be appreciated by looking at school district statistics over a sixteen year span. In 1905, the district spent \$5,500 per year, employed five teachers, and had 162 students in grades one through eight--but had no high school. By the time the high school was completed, the district spent \$60,000 annually, employed 27 teachers, and had 725 students, 220 of which were in the high school grades.

The increasing needs of the still growing school district required the expansion of the high school during the 1920's and 1930's. The large north wing of the school which parallels Kibler Avenue was erected by Thomas in 1928. A detached garage to house school buses was also built at this time to the south of the school.

A second addition was built in 1935 with Federal assistance. This major expansion included a 1,312 seat auditorium, a cafeteria, a new boys' gymnasium, and boys' and girls' shower and locker rooms. At this time, many people of the region were unemployed. A hunger strike was scheduled to join a statewide march to the capitol in Olympia. The King County Welfare Board was distributing seeds to the needy for spring planting. Consequently, the decision to expand the school came as a great relief to unemployed construction workers. William Mallis was chosen as the architect and his exterior design was strictly utilitarian. The decision to include a performing arts hall and cafeteria is typical of Federally-assisted school projects during this era.

In 1938, Mallis designed a small three story addition that was attached to the western end of Thomas's 1928 wing. Given the prominence of this facade, Mallis copied Thomas's facade arrangement and detailing. A metal plaque on this last addition noted that the funds for the building came from the Works Progress Administration.

Junior high school age students were also housed in the high school building starting in 1928. The high school students were removed to a new location in 1963. Since that time, the building has been used solely as a junior high school. In the spring of this year, the junior high school students were moved to a modern facility, and the building is currently vacant.

The Enumclaw High School is the only historic school building remaining in Enumclaw. All other remnants of Enumclaw's educational heritage have been lost. Although many older schools exist throughout King County, the Enumclaw High School was the most important educational edifice to be built in the Enumclaw area between 1915 and 1950.

The high school is one of Enumclaw's most imposing structures. When erected, the school was by far the largest building in the town itself and it continues to dominate the surrounding neighborhood of one and two story wood frame homes. Conservative yet handsome, the school has been a continuing focus of community pride. Architecturally, the school is without peer in Enumclaw. Yet, the building is typical of schools erected across the United States in the 1920's. Facades were largely flat and symmetrical and ornamentation was usually reserved and derived from the Colonial and Classic Revival Styles. Thomas's Weatherwax High School in Aberdeen is more classically inspired, but exhibits the same slightly projecting entrance and end pavilions and large banks of windows. Thomas's earlier J.J. Smith School in Enumclaw exhibited much of the same detailing as the later High School and Thomas certainly employed it as a model (the Smith School was demolished in the 1950's). Also common to the period are the wide central halls, hardwood floors, and classrooms with built-in cabinets and hardwood moldings.

Finally, the high school has achieved significance for its role in the social life of the community. The large auditorium has been the area's primary performance facility for decades. Countless plays, community meetings, and concerts have been presented at the school. Practically any secular social activity of importance would have been held there. The gymnasiums served similar roles in community sports activities. Consequently, the Enumclaw High School remains a unique symbol of its community's social and educational life in those important years of growth, depression, and recovery.

Harlan Thomas

Harlan Thomas was one of Seattle's most prominent architects in the first decades of the twentieth century. Born in 1870 in Iowa, his family moved to Colorado where he learned the trade of carpentry. At the age of 24, he received a degree from Colorado State College and began to practice architecture in that state. By 1906, he had moved to Seattle and had launched his successful career on the Pacific Coast, becoming the senior partner in the firm of Thomas, Grainger, Thomas. Thomas became the president of the Washington Chapter of the A.I.A. in 1925. He was appointed Dean of the University of Washington's School of Architecture in 1926, succeeding Carl Gould, the school's first dean. He retired from the university in 1940, and lived until 1953.

Thomas's buildings exhibit a variety of styles reflecting the popular eclecticism of the period. His architectural commissions include the Rhodes Department Store, Seattle; the Chamber of Commerce Building, Seattle; the Sorrento Hotel, Seattle; Harbor View Hospital, Seattle; Chelsea Hotel, Seattle, (National Register 1978); Lincoln Sales and Service Office, Seattle; several churches, including the Seventh Church of Christ Science, Seattle; and schools in Monroe, Enumclaw, and Aberdeen, Washington; and Juneau, Alaska. Thomas was also responsible for a large number of domestic designs.

Though the Enumclaw High School cannot be counted among the architect's most imaginative achievements, the structure is nicely composed and exhibits his familiarity with current trends in educational architecture. The school remains a good example of its type and it clearly reflects its period of construction.

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